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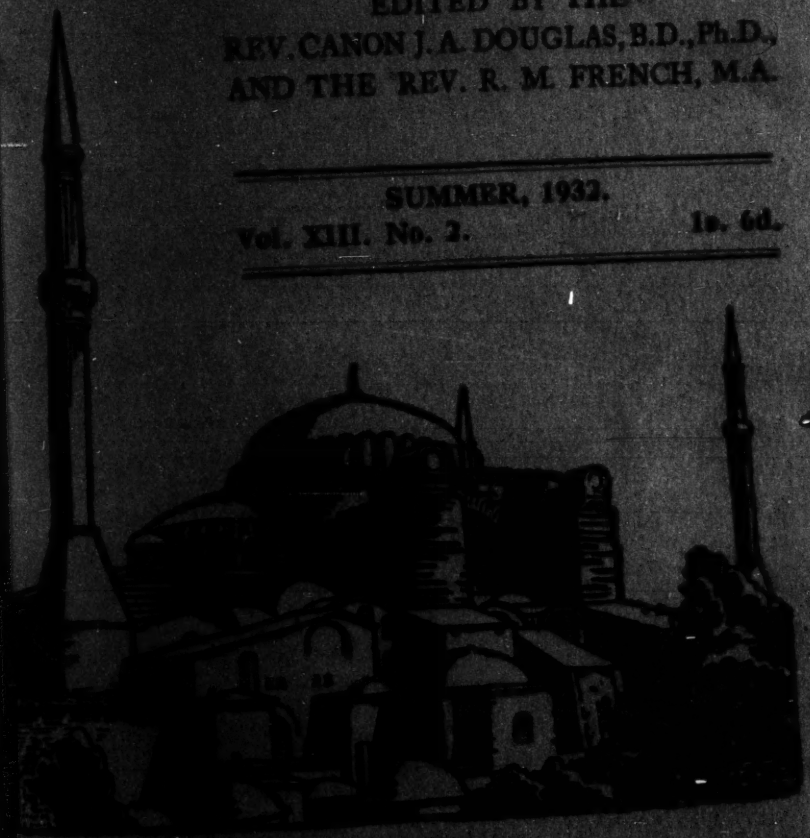

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The Christian East

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN REVELATION.

By PROF. G. FLOROVSKY.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day and for ever"
(*Heb.* 13 : 8.)

IT is always the first definitions which are the most difficult. Here we have nothing to which we can refer, nothing from which we can draw deductions. We must not prove, but show; we must look and see.

And just now I am very keenly conscious of the difficulty of speaking of initial principles.

Revelation is a primordial fact, the initial gift of Christianity, of Christian life and faith. "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. . . . The things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God" (I Cor. 2 : 10-11). And again: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. 12 : 3).

In our usual conception of Revelation there is a certain heterogeneity, even a certain ambiguity. And the first thing we have to do is to find out in what this heterogeneity consists, and how we are to set it aside. In a certain sense the whole world is the Revelation of God. The creation of the world is a revelation, "a manifestation of God," in "conceivable images." The whole world testifies of God, of His Wisdom, Mercy and Love. This is generally named: "Revelation through Nature." This is Revelation in *matter*, so-to-say, the Revelation which is immanent in the very nature and essence of things; which is inscribed and implanted there. Above all, it exists in the nature of man himself; man, who was created and made in God's image and likeness. This is the "Law of God" "Written in the hearts of men" (Rom. 2 : 15).

But strictly speaking this is not Revelation in the direct meaning of the word. It is better to speak here not of *Revelation*, but of God's *manifestation*. In Nature, visible and invisible, God is manifested, not revealed. In Nature and in the human soul we find only "certain traces of God," "*vestigia Dei naturalia*." But,

so far, this is no theophany. This is only a testimony (Testimonium) *of God;* and from it the human mind may *conclude* or presuppose God's existence; may become conscious of God; may divine God in His works. This gives birth to "seeking after God," to religious longing, to religious needs, still unclear and wavering: "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us" (Acts, 17:27). But so far this is not yet knowledge of God, it is not seeing or knowing. Strictly speaking Revelation is not the fundamental essence of every religious life. Even more, we have a right to say that Revelation is, in general, not religion, but it is greater than religion. It is something different, something *apart from religion*. It is not the manifestation of God in His creation, in the beings created by Him, but a direct *vision* of God granted to man. God is manifested in all and always. Here we stand before a certain continuity, the continuity of Divine Omnipresence of Him "who is omipotent and omnipresent."

But not everywhere and not to all is this *vision* of God granted. There is no continuity in theophanies. Here we are in a realm of rupture and interruptions, of interruptions in the continuous stream of the world's natural order, though this too is established by Divine command and by Divine Providence, by the Providence of the Omnipotent Creator. This is the realm of the supernatural, and only the "supernatural" is the Revelation of God in the real meaning of the word. In the "Religion of Nature" man recognizes and divines God; seeks after Him and reaches out for Him, for "He be not far from every one of us." But this is only *the path of man towards God*. Revelation is the *path of God towards man*. This is above nature, supernatural, this is something new and different, something greater than that force of movement and life which has been implanted in every created being by the pre-eternal and creative "Fiat."

Or, in other words, in Nature God is manifested as the Creator of vitality, the Giver of existence and of life. But in the supernatural, in what is above nature, God in His transcendence appears and is revealed as He who spake; "Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Heb. 1:1-2). God is revealed in the *Word*, and only God's word is Revelation in its direct and exact meaning. Revelation is the Divine Voice, the Voice of God, speaking to man. Man hears this Voice, listens to it, accepts it, and understands the Divine Word. For God speaks so that man should hear Him. God created man in His image and likeness that man should listen for His Voice and Word, should hear it, and, even more, that he should treasure it, remember it, and keep it. When we speak of

Revelation, we have in mind just the Word of God that has been *heard* by us. Some heard it direct, without any intermediary; these were the great initiated and prophets. Others heard of it through the mediation of those who were commanded by God and by the power and aid of the Holy Ghost to repeat what they had heard and seen themselves. The Holy Scriptures are the written record of the Revelation they heard, and it was God who gave them the strength, through the outpouring of His Holy Ghost, to hear and write down His words. The sacred mystery of Divine inspiration cannot be completely fathomed by us. We cannot fully understand in what manner "God's holy men" heard the Word of their God and how they repeated it in the words of their own tongue. But even in their transmission it was the Voice of God, the Voice of the Holy Ghost, that was heard, and the feeble human voice, the voice of flesh and blood, had no part in it. Therein lies the miracle and mystery of the Bible that it is the Word of God, the Word of the Spirit, who "spake by the prophets," and yet it is the Word of the Spirit *in a human tongue*. And whatever the manner in which we understand the Divine inspiration of Scripture, one thing is important. The scriptures transmit and preserve for us the Divine Voice in the tongue of man. The scriptures transmit and preserve for us the Divine Word such as it had been heard, such as it sounded in the receptive soul of man. The mystery of Divine inspiration is not only that God spoke to man, but also that man was listening to God and heard Him. God descends to man, shows His Face to man; speaks to him. And man sees God, is lost in the vision of God, and describes what he has seen and heard, bearing witness to what has been revealed to him. Therein lies the significance of the Old Testament Divine visions, of the Old Testament Revelations. In them there is a certain essential anthropomorphism, and this not so much because of the weakness of human understanding, or from a sense of "adaptability," but as a foretaste of the coming incarnation. It is already in the Old Testament that the Divine Word becomes human, is incarnated in the human tongue. And there is another point of great importance. If we want the Divine Word to ring clear, the human tongue must not lose its natural qualities. It must not leave off being human. What is human is not suppressed or swept away by Divine inspiration; it is only transfigured. The supernatural does not go counter to what is natural.

Therefore, it is that God chooses to speak in the human tongue, that through Divine inspiration, through the Breath of the Spirit of Omniscience and Wisdom, human nature should be completed, fulfilled. The human tongue does not weaken or belittle the absoluteness of Revelation; it does not limit the power of God's Word. The Word of God may be exactly and strictly expressed

in the language of man, who is created in the image and likeness of God; in the image of God's Word, as was taught by some of the Fathers of the Church. The Word of God does not grow dim because it sounds and is pronounced in the tongue of man. On the contrary, the human word becomes transfigured, transubstantiated, because God deigned to speak in the human tongue. The Divine Spirit breathes in the organism of human speech, in the substance of human words. And therefore the tongue of man acquires force and firmness. It becomes possible for the word of man to speak of God. Theology becomes possible.

Strictly speaking theology grows possible only through Revelation. It is the answering speech of man to God, as man's witness of God who had spoken to him; whose voice he had heard and remembered, and whose words he had kept and was repeating. So-called "natural theology" is no theology in the true sense of the word. It is rather a philosophy, a word about the "Unknown God," towards whom the restless human soul reaches out but has not yet found; frequently it loses its way in its search. This is the "Word about a God who has not yet revealed Himself; about whom man can so far say nothing, unless it be that his soul panteth for Him and longeth for Him as the hart panteth for the spring of water." And it is only through Revelation that true theology becomes possible. For the first time in answer to Revelation true prayer is poured out in words of testimony, words of adoration, of thanksgiving and of petition. Again it is an answer to the Word of God.

In Sacred Scripture we are, first of all, struck by the intimate relation of God to man and of man to God. In Scripture we see not only God, but man as well. It is the Revelation of God, but it is also a revelation concerning man. God reveals Himself to man, *appears* before him, becomes visible to him, speaks with him, so as to reveal to man the hidden meaning of his existence, to show him the path and meaning of human life. In Scripture we see God coming to reveal Himself to man, and we see man meeting God and not only listening to His Words, but answering them. In Scripture we not only hear the Voice of God, but also the voice of man answering Him—in words of prayer, thanksgiving, adoration, sorrow, and contrition. God wants, and expects, and demands this answer. It is for this that He speaks with man. He expects man to answer Him. He is waiting for man to talk with Him. And He draws up His covenant with man.

Revelation is the history of this covenant. Recorded Revelation —Sacred Scripture—is, first of all, history. Law and prophets, psalms and prophecies are included and woven into the living historical web.

Scripture is history, the history of the world created by God,

and the history of man who is called to be the priest, the prophet, and the king of this world. Scripture begins with the creation of the world and is brought up to the eve of the new creation: "Behold I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). Between these two extreme points, that of the first creative, "Let there be," and that of the latest prophecy, the living web of Sacred Scripture dynamically unfolds itself. Revelation is not only a system of Divine *words*, but, above all, the system of Divine *works*. This is the reason of the extension of time in Sacred Scripture. We might say that Revelation was the path of God in history. And the culminating point is reached when God enters history for all time; when the Word is incarnated, when God-Man is revealed.

Revelation is also the book of human fate. First of all, it is the book which narrates the fall and the salvation of man. It speaks of the first created paradise, of Adam's expulsion from it as a consequence of his sin; of the first promise of salvation, the so-called "First Gospel" (Gen. 3:15). It speaks of the path fallen man had to tread upon earth, of the new promises, and, at last, of the chosen "Father of all the faithful," Abraham, and of the covenant made with him. It is from here that the actual Old Testament begins. The Old Testament is the sacred history of Israel, the history of that unique people, the people chosen by God, with whom God concluded His covenant. Here the most important thing is the fact of election; the separation of Israel, the setting Israel apart from all other peoples. Israel is the grace-given, sacred oasis in the history of fallen mankind. Only with one people on earth did God conclude a covenant and give it His own law, Divinely inscribed on tables of stone. God establishes in the midst of this people a true priesthood, even though only a temporal and prophetic one. He raises from among it the prophets, who speak words inspired by the Spirit of God. Before Christ it was in Israel alone that there existed a true priesthood and not only an idolatrous one. Therefore it was only there that true Divine service was performed. Here alone was sacrifice, pleasing in God's eyes, offered. Here alone was there a true temple of God, the only temple of the sort in all the world. It was a sacred centre for all the world—an oasis granted by the Grace of God, in the midst of a sinful, unredeemed world. It is from here that sanctification begins. "The cloud filled the House of the Lord" (I Kings, 8:10). This election and separation of Israel is easily understood and explained from an historical standpoint, from the historical mission of Israel. Israel is the first-fruit of mankind. Its historical mission leads to the birth in its midst of the world's Saviour. In it was to be accomplished the last limit of the final Revelation of God, the incarnation of the Word. It was because of this that the legislation of Mount Sinai was

granted to this people; because of this the prophets spoke. The Sacred meaning of the Old Testament is that it is the history of the ancestors of our Saviour, and therefore it is by mentioning them that the Gospels begin their narrative: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Math. 1:1). "For salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). The Old Testament is the period of the Messianic expectation, the time of covenants and prophecies. It is not only the prophets that prophesy. Events also become prophecies. The Old Testament history, as a whole, is a kind of foregiven image, an historical symbol, a looking forward towards approaching events. St. Augustine said: "The New Testament is contained within the Old and the Old is revealed in the New. In *Vetere Testamento Novum latet, in Novo Testamento Vetus patet;* and the Messianic tense expectation culminates in the appearance of the God-Man: "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). The time of expectation is passed; the promise has been accomplished; the Lord has come. He has come to abide and remain with those who believe in Him: "Alway, even unto the end of the world" (Math. 28:20). The Old Testament history is finishing—the history of flesh and blood. The history of the Spirit is beginning—the Kingdom of Truth and Grace is opened (John 1:17). And yet the law is not destroyed, but fulfilled (Math. 5:17), and the prophecies have been accomplished and did not prove vain. The Old Testament was fulfilled, revealed, and completed in the New, *in Novo patet.* And therefore the books of the Hebrews are still sacred for Christians. Not only, because *once,* in olden times, God spoke to Israel, but also because *now, too,* the Word of God is to be heard in the Bible, and *now* through this eternal, eternally living book, God's Revelation *continues* coming down to us. It is therein that the mystery of the Bible consists; this is the mystery of the inspired, transfigured, transubstantiated word. This does not mean that the Bible is used in the Church as *a book of parables,* as a book of historical examples and cases, a collection of texts or theological instances *(Loci theologici).* No, the Bible remains a history, and it is just as a book of *sacred history* that it preserves all its power. The law is already set aside and is replaced by something higher. The temple exists no more in Jerusalem and the House of Israel is empty (Luke, 13:35). Prophecy has been accomplished.

However, in *sacred history* events not only take place and pass away, but they are *accomplished* and *fulfilled,* they are completed. The past does not mean *"passed"* or *"was,"* but, above all, has been *fulfilled.* Fulfilment is the fundamental essence of Revelation. That which has become sacred remains holy for always and without change. It has the seal, the sign, and the blessing of the

Holy Ghost. For even to the present moment the Spirit breathes in the words once inspired by it. The Old Testament is, above all, *a book* for us. The New Testament is more than a book. In the Old Testament we see most clearly the meaning of the Revelation as *of a Word*. Therefore we witness to the Spirit "that spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets" (Heb. 1:2). In the New Testament God hath spoken to us by His Son, and we are bound not only to hear, but to see, too.

We admit that the Old Testament is a difficult book. And, as time runs on, it grows no easier. Perhaps, on the contrary, it is more difficult for us to read it than it was for our ancestors. This is not the time or place to ask and discuss the question concerning the "historical authenticity" of the Old Testament. There is no time here to unravel the complex and difficult problem of the so-called "Higher Criticism." It would involve us in giving too much time to it in this paper. But all these critical investigations do not touch upon the fundamental principle of Revelation; do not deflect from its Divine inspiration. Scientific criticism cannot prove the sacred value of the Bible; cannot refute it. Divine inspiration is not a category of autonomous science. The reason of man, left to itself, cannot feel inspiration. Divine inspiration presupposes a certain *rupture* in the natural order. We need a special method of seeing to be able to recognize it. This in no wise means that faith and reason cannot be united, and that reason knows no religious truths and postulates; that religious truth, the truth of Revelation, is not obligatory or convincing for reason. On the contrary! But to achieve this, reason itself must be transfigured. Out of a world of two dimensions we must pass over into one of three; we must *feel depth*. Herein lies the nucleus of the *theological* question of Higher Criticism. To be able to feel the breath of the Spirit in Sacred Scripture, we must "strive after the Spirit," we must possess spiritual intuition and insight. We must learn to discern *profanum et sacrum;* we must know and feel *what* is *profanum* and *what* is *sacrum;* we must admit and know that there *is* a *sacrum*, quite apart from *profanum*. And this transfiguration of our consciousness can be accomplished only in the Church, in its spiritual charismatic completeness. Revelation has been granted to the Church not to individuals. In the Old Testament also "God's Words" were entrusted not to individuals, but to God's *people* (Rom. 3:2). Revelation has been given only to the Church, and only in the Church is it accessible to us; i.e., it can be accessible only in the *fullness* of spiritual life. Outside the Church, for outsiders, it becomes unclear, unconvincing. This unclearness is the nether side of our inattention, of our absence of intuition.

The apex of Revelation is in the Gospels. For the fullness of

Revelation—is Christ. The New Testament is also, first of all, history—the Gospel history of the incarnated Word and of the beginning of the history of the Church, which is now expecting its apocalyptic fulfilment. The basis of the New Testament is facts, events, realities; not only commandments, teaching, and words. Here the basis is Christ and the Church, His Body. "The fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:23). The Gospel is history. *Historical events* are the subject and source of Christian faith and Christian hope. From the beginning, from the very day of Pentecost, when the Apostle Peter as an *eye-witness*, ("Whereof we are all witnesses," Acts 2:32), *witnessed* to the fulfilment of salvation, apostolic preaching had an historical character. But again it is a *sacred history*. The Apostles always speak of concrete historical facts and events. They bring vividly before the consciousness of their hearers the *image of Christ*, they make it live anew, and they show who He was. The uniqueness, the marvel of this historical Figure consists in the fact that He who became visible, whom we saw, was the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Therefore it is that human limits, belonging to a world of two dimensions, cannot encompass this Image. It transcends them; and within historical boundaries we see what is super-historical, what is above the earth. But the boundaries are not obliterated, not wiped away, not dimmed; in the sacred Image historical features are still visible. Therein lies the meaning and importance of apostolic preaching that it is a *narrative*, a narrative of what the Apostles themselves heard and saw, of what was fulfilled and accomplished, *hic et nunc*. "Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled" (I. John, 1:1). But what happened was unheard of: "The Word was made flesh" (John 1:14). Therefore this narrative is more than merely a narrative; it relates not only something that took place, but something that was realized and completed. Through historical vision we catch sight of what is visible only to the eyes of faith, what only the few saw and recognized during the lifetime of the Saviour; what even the Apostles saw and recognized fully only later, after His resurrection, when He had opened their understanding that they might understand "The mysteries of the Kingdom" (Luke, 24:45). The Gospel is a narrative and an image, but it is the narrative about God-Man. And just because it is a narrative and an historical witness there is a certain reserve in it. The scope of faith is more than reminiscence. Faith grows living in creative recognition of what it has seen and heard in communion with Christ. The Gospels give us a unique, integral image, an image both Divine and human—the image of God become man. For those whose capacity of perception is not fine

enough this image often appears as two separate images, just as it did to those who saw Him in the flesh, as long as their hearts had not been enlightened by faith. The Evangelists and the Apostles were no chroniclers. It was not their mission to relate all that had been done by Jesus, day by day, year by year. They described His image and related His works, so as to give us His image; an historical, yet a Divine image. The Gospels may be called *"An historical ikon,"* an ikon in words not in lines and colours, yet a picture of His face. Or, to be more exact, the Gospels are not one, but four ikons, a four-fold ikon of God-Man. And this ikon has been delineated by the power of the Spirit. The gospels are the records of the apostolic "good tidings," and the preaching of the Apostles was contained not "in the doubtful words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (I Cor. 2:4), in the numerous separate reminiscences the figure of Jesus grows living and the sensitive heart recognizes in Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and risen, the Saviour of the world and the God-Man. The earthly plan of the Gospel is always mysteriously transparent, and through the historical evidence we see the glimmering of Divine reality. It is true that not all see this, just as not all saw it then; and not "flesh and blood," but the Father which is in Heaven hath revealed that He was the Son of the living God (Math. 16:16-17). In the mysterious blending of the double features the Face of God-Man has been drawn, seen, and recognized. For thus it was described by the Evangelists. The whole of the New Testament throbs with historical fulfilment of what has been and is accomplished. But this is no historically isolated earthly stream of events, of "natural events." The narrative of what took place is a realistic narrative. It was, it happened, this meeting of the sky and the earth, of God and man. The meeting and the union: *"And the Word was made flesh"* (John 1:14). "And yet no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. 17:3). It means that revelation becomes clearly heard by us in all its fullness only in spiritual experience. Therefore the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, has been sent down to us that He "Will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13), that He should "bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). And to the present day, "The same anointing teacheth you all things" (I John 2:27). The Gospels are written within the Church. They are the records of the apostolic "good tidings," of the apostolic preaching, and the strength of this preaching built up the Church: "Go ye, therefore, and teach." The Gospels are the records of Church experience and faith, records of what is visible in the experience of the Church. It is the living Image of Christ which the Church has contemplated from the beginning;

and it is only within the Church that this Image is fully and wholly accessible. St. Athanasius the Great says: "It is the direct and living meeting with Christ, into whom all the faithful are clothed in the sacrament of Holy Baptism; we are satisfied by the Spirit; we drink Christ."

Divine Revelation is preserved in the Church. It is protected and strengthened by the words of Scripture; it is protected, but not exhausted. The words of Scripture do not exhaust the whole fullness of Revelation; do not exhaust the whole fullness of Christian experience and of the charismatic reminiscence of the Church. The experience of the Church is wider than its direct testimony. Therefore those who abide in the Church know infinitely more and quite otherwise than "outsiders." For those who abide within the Church, the testimony of the Spirit makes the Scriptures a clearer, a fuller thing; this testimony once more lives in their own personal experience. And this is why we must not speak of the "self-sufficing quality" of Scripture. For Scripture is not only preserved by the power of human memory; it is also protected by the power of Grace in the charismatic life of the Church. In the Church, Revelation becomes an inner spiritual experience. The Church in itself is already a Revelation. From the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost *entered* the world to *abide* in it, Revelation has become an uninterrupted continuity. The fiery baptism of the created world was accomplished. It was represented by the twelve Apostles and those that were with them, as the chosen first-fruit (Math. 3:2). At any rate the Scriptures demand that they should be expounded and explained. And a true explanation will be one that proceeds from the realities described in the Scriptures. It must be no outward, but an inward explanation, growing out of the depth of spiritual experience. And here we do not so much speak of the personal spiritual intuition of every separate expounder, as, above all, of the living of the fullness of the spiritual experience of the Church itself. For in this experience the Scriptures become vivified by the same Spirit who had once inspired them. When the Church expounds Scripture it bears witness to *that* of which the Scriptures testify. But frequently new words are used. Revelation is received in the silence of faith, the silence of contemplation—such is the first silently receptive moment of theology. And in this receptive silence of contemplation the whole fullness of Truth is contained and given. But *Truth must still be expressed and pronounced.* Because man is called not only to receive Truth attentively, but also to witness of it. *Silencium mysticum* does not exhaust the complete calling of man. He is called to creative activity, above all, to the building up of his own self. God's Word must become evident in the reality of human thought; God's Word must give

birth to human thought. This is the creative or positive moment of the knowledge of God. Divine reality revealed in the experience of the Church may be described in manifold ways. *Either* in images and symbols, in religious poetry and religious art—such was the language of the Old Testament prophets; thus frequently spoke the Evangelists, thus preached the Apostles, and thus the Church is still preaching in the songs and hymns of its Divine service, in the symbolic meaning of its rites. This is the tongue of preaching or witnessing; it is the tongue of charismatic theology. *Or,* Divine reality may be described in the conceptions of the mind, in research. This is the language of dogma, of dogmatic theology. "Preaching" and "Dogma" are the two ways in which the Church bears witness to Truth, to that inner Revelation which is still continuing in the Church by the power of the Spirit abiding in it (cp. St. Basil the Great concerning the Holy Ghost). This Revelation, this deepening and growing into "The Knowledge of Truth," is the life of the Church: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

Dogma is *thought witnessing* to Revelation, to what it has seen, to what was revealed to it, to the visible and the contemplated in the Catholic experience of the Church. And this witness is expressed in definitions and conceptions. Dogma is the sentence of experience, the *mental vision,* true contemplation. We may name it the "logical image," the "logical ikon of Divine reality. And, at the same time, dogma is a *definition.* Therefore it is that both the logical form of dogma, that "inner word" which is fixed and made definite in outward expression, and the outward choice of words, are so important in dogma.

Dogma is no new Revelation; dogma *is only a witness,* a witness of the mind, such as is worthy of the experienced and recognized Divine Revelation, a Revelation granted and revealed in the charismatic experience of faith, of the mysteries of life eternal, such as has been shown by the Holy Ghost. All dogma is revealed by experience, in true contact with "things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

This is the source of dogmatic decisive authority and of the unchangeableness of Truth, revealed and preserved from the beginning. Dogmas are not developed or changed. They are inviolable, even in their outward choice of words. Perhaps it may sound paradoxical, but it is still true to say that dogmas can arise, can be established and expressed, but they cannot be developed. A dogma once established is an eternal inviolable "rule of faith" and the measure of it. Of course this does not mean that something new, some "new truth" is being revealed; but it does mean that such a truth is being *expressed* and *pronounced.* In its dogmatic

witness the Church is *expressing* and *pronouncing* the truths preserved within its fold. And its aim is to find and establish the *exact* words, which should truly express the experience of the Church. These words must be able to transmit the "vision of the mind," which is being revealed to the faithful spirit in experience and contemplation. There is a pre-dogmatic period of Church consciousness; then the language chosen is one of images and symbols. But after this comes the time for bearing dogmatic witness. For truth of faith is truth of reason as well, and thought must enter "into the knowledge of truth." In doing this it becomes creatively transfigured, the very realm of thought becomes transfigured, sanctified, and renewed. When Divine Truth is pronounced and expressed in the human tongue, the very words are transfigured, and the fact that the Truths of Revelation are imparted in logical images and conceptions witnesses to the transfiguration of word and thought, *words become sacred.* The words of dogmatic definitions, frequently taken from the habitual philosophic vocabulary, are no more simple, casual words, which might have been and still may be replaced by some others. No, they have grown to be *eternal, irreplaceable* words. This signifies that in the adequate expression of a Divine Truth certain words, i.e., definite *conceptions* and *ideas,* or a *definite train of thought* have been eternalized and stabilized. This means that eternal and absolute ideas are being sought; therefore the Truth of Revelation may be and is adequately expressed in them. This Truth of Revelation has been positively granted, and not only postulated. Not something to be sought, but something given. However incommensurable our present knowledge "in part" is to the promised knowledge that is to be "face to face," still, now as alway, it is full and perfect. Truth is being revealed in Catholic experience and is being expressed in dogmatic definitions. The dogmas of the Fathers *repeat* in categories of thought the unchangeable contents of "apostolic preaching," they express "in words of reason dogmas which once were narrated in simple words by fishermen, who had received wisdom thereto by the power of the Spirit."

By the power of the Spirit. In the dogmatic definitions of the Church we again feel the life-giving power of the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Wisdom. Dogmas are pronounced not by the arbitrary desire of man, but by the inspiration of the Spirit. Usually this was done during the Œcumenical Councils, but sometimes also through the silent reception of *"ecclesiæ sparsæ."*

And again; dogmas do not exhaust the experience of the Church; just as Revelation is not exhausted in the words or the "letter" of Scripture. In dogmatic definitions the Truth of experience is only determined and protected, but not exhausted.

The experience and faith of the Church are fuller and wider than its dogmatic word. There is much to which the Church witnesses even to the present day in images, symbols, and similes, in symbolic theology. Probably this will exist to the end of time, i.e., to the last passing over from here to the beyond (see St. Gregory the Theologian). From the very beginning the Church was given the fullness of Truth. But it is only gradually and "in part" that this fullness is being expressed. In general all our knowledge here, is always a knowledge "in part." The exhaustive fullness will be revealed *only in the beyond,* in the Second Advent, in the "meeting with Our Lord." From here proceeds the dogmatic incompleteness of the Church's witness; this is also caused by the Church being "in a state of pilgrimage," *"in via";* that it is still being "completed and maketh increase (Eph. 4:16). The human spirit and reason are still "increasing." The historical aims of the knowledge of God, of understanding Revelation, are still facing us. There is much that is still to be accomplished. However the incompleteness and the inexhaustibleness of our knowledge here does not weaken its truth, its finality, the impossibility of replacing it; does not deprive it of the finality which has been attained. Within the limits of Church experience there are many mysteries for us to contemplate, mysteries for which no dogmatic words have been found so far. Here there is scope for "theological opinions" and research. There can also exist freedom in the understanding of established dogmas. Of course there is no room here for subjective arbitrary mental choice. Theology must always remain vital, *intuitive;* it must be nourished by the *experience of faith,* and must not be split up into autonomous isolated dialectic conceptions. Once more we want to remind you that the dogmas of faith are the truths of experience and of life—therefore they can be unfolded through no logical synthesis and analysis, but only through *spiritual life,* through actual participation in the fullness of Church experience. A lawful "theological opinion" can be attained not through any logical deduction, but only through direct vision, and this again can only be attained through strenuous prayerful effort, through a striving after the Spirit, through personal spiritual growth, through living communion with the constant Catholic experience of the Church.

Theology can be realized only through a *Catholic transfiguration* of those who are striving to attain knowledge. Catholicity is a victory over all manner of separatism. Catholicity strives against all kinds of individual isolation, against the self-assertion of exclusiveness and isolation. Catholicity is a certain attitude of conciousness, the measure and limit of spiritual growth. In this Catholic transfiguration, personality grows complete and receives the faculty and strength of feeling and expressing the consciousness and life of the

whole. And those, who, in striving to attain Catholic development, have gained this power, accept it as a gift of the Spirit. We name those who express the experience and consciousness of the Church, "Fathers and Teachers of the Church"; because from them we hear not only their own personal professions, but also the witness of the Church. It is out of Catholic fullness that they speak. In their words we feel the breath of the Spirit. The fullness of Revelation is assimilated by the Church in the measure of its spiritual growth. And this gradualness in the profession of faith is connected with the dynamic growth of Church existence, with the process of vital salvation, sanctification, and transfiguration. Perhaps it is not by chance that it is just those dogmatic definitions which treat of the building up of the "new creation" and of the final fate of the Church, which have not yet been expressed. Because this has not yet been fulfilled in time, because we are still seeing its fulfilment: and therefore we know not all about it, and can speak of it only in prophecies and symbols. In those dogmas which have already been established, that which pertains to the future is but partially visible. We possess no categorical definitions concerning the abiding of the Holy Spirit in the world, the action of the Holy Spirit in it; not of the life of the saints and sinners beyond the tomb, nor of much else that is awaiting its accomplishment. Here the Church often limits itself to dogmatic negation, i.e., it witnesses in an authoritative manner to what we are not allowed and must not think. And this witness proceeds from the depth of that experience which has not yet been and cannot be expressed. But the Church does not hasten to establish in dogmatic formulæ positive theological opinions of the future. And this not because it does not know, but because the time has not yet come for it to pronounce itself. The Church witnesses in a categorical manner to that which is ever present, to that which does not belong to time (as for instance the dogma of the Holy Trinity); or to that which has already been revealed, seen, and accomplished (the dogma of the Person of Our Savour). And in the dogma of Christ the first things defined were those which pertained to the past, in so far as they belonged to time (Incarnation, reality of the sufferings and death on the cross, Resurrection, Ascension); or again it witnesses to that which was revealed direct by Our Saviour Himself (the Second Advent, universal resurrection, the Day of Judgment). Of all else the Church prefers to bear testimony in symbols and similes, not dogmatically, but liturgically; as when it establishes the solemn festivals of Ascension and Transfiguration; or that of the Life-giving Cross. Here the Church testifies to much that has not yet found its final dogmatic expression; to much that is bound up with the sanctification, i.e., the perfection of the world; a sanctification that is being, but has not yet been, accomplished.

The mystery of the Ascension of Our Lord can be fully revealed only at the Second Advent "When He shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts, 1:11). For only then, and in the resurrection of all, will the created body be fully re-established and become incorruptible. The mystery of the Lord's Transfiguration is also closely connected with this. We catch but a glimpse of it in the witness of the Light of Mount Tabor, given by the Byzantine Councils of the XIV century. There is no doubt that much has been given us only as foreknowledge. However, this does not mean that we have the right to form whatever opinion we like concerning the truths that have not been expressed; or that here there is nothing obligatory for us. The realm of foreknowledge is no "doubtful realm" *(Dubitum)* in which unlimited "freedom" is permitted us *(In dubiis libertas)*. The absence of "dogmatic" definitions does not indicate *absence of knowledge*, and does not authorize complete *reserve* from *all* judgment. For that which has not been given in dogma has been given us in an experience, which is the source of the dogmatic definitions of the Church. It has also often been given in written recorded Revelation, which is not exhausted in dogmatic expressions, and which is full of mystery and prophecies. Not all that is known and revealed is proclaimed dogmatically by the Church, but *all is given* in the dialectic experience of the Church, which indissolubly abides with its head, Jesus Christ, and is unchangeably enlightened and inspired by the Life-giving Spirit.

Father Sergius Bulgakov expressed himself very adequately when he said: "He who has once met Christ, His Saviour, on his own personal path, and has felt His Divinity, has, in that very moment, accepted all fundamental Christian dogmas—Virgin Birth, Incarnation, Second Glorious Advent, the Coming of the Comforter, the Holy Trinity." (S. Bulgakov: "The Undying Light." 1917, p. 57). To this I want to add: "Or else he has not yet met Christ, or, at any rate, has not recognized Him." "The Spirit abideth with us now, and, in the striving after the Spirit, the path towards the fullness of the knowledge of God is opened to us." (St. Gregory the Theologian).

God speaks to man through His Spirit; and only in the measure in which man abides in the Spirit does he hear and understand this voice: "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). There are no isolated paths of spiritual life. Since the Day of Pentecost the Spirit abideth in the Church, where God hath ordained "the action of the Spirit" (*"Omnem operationem Spiritus,"* as St. Ireneus of Lyons said). Here, by the power of the Spirit, is every soul quickened. Here the Word of God rings

and is heard—all the words pronounced since the beginning. Here is the fullness and the path of knowledge. The striving after the Spirit, the prayer for the granting of the Spirit, is the path in which we can glorify God. Through the Breath of the Spirit God's Revelation will be eternally vivified and will be built up into the living organism of the one and undivided Truth.

The Church teaches us to pray :

"Our Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Omnipresent and All-fulfilling, Treasure of all Good, and Giver of Life, come and abide in us, cleanse us from all evil, and save, O All-merciful, our souls."

PROTESTANTISM VERSUS HISTORY

By HOFFMAN NICKERSON

A FEW months ago the Bishop of New York set forth in a sermon the doctrine of the ministry, and especially of the Episcopate, held not only by Anglicans but also by Rome and by the Eastern Churches: namely, that from the beginning there have been in the Church of God the three Orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. This sermon was attacked not only by various Protestants but also by certain Protestant-minded Anglicans, one hostile commentator remarking that it "showed no evidence of scholarship."

I propose now to examine the Protestant case against the apostolic succession of our Bishops, not in the light of any detailed study of Christian origins (to which I lay no claim) but solely through that general knowledge of the subject easily obtainable by any educated man. To this general knowledge I can add familiarity with the handling of historical evidence and considerable reading on certain phases of mediæval and modern history.

Protestants used to deny altogether the Orthodox-Catholic doctrine of the ministry, saying in particular that the Early Church had no bishops. The advance of historical science has now so completely disproved this earlier and sweeping denial that probably no one at all acquainted with the subject would make it to-day. Accordingly the Protestant thesis is now more modestly put. It is admitted that the Catholic and Apostolic ministry of Bishops, Priests and Deacons existed in the Early Church but it is argued that it did not exist alone, that beside it there were forms of Church government of a sort which we should call to-day Presbyterian (that is, government by synods of Priests or Presbyters, the Greek word for an Elder, *Presbuteros*, having developed into our word Priest), perhaps also Congregationalist.

This theory of diversity is put forward on an historical basis and must therefore be judged as history. History is not a "science," that is not an exact science. Its conclusions are never based upon mathematically perfect proof because there is always the chance, however slight, that the witnesses on whom it must rely may have been either mistaken or liars. Accordingly its certainties are matters of converging probability, and the estimate of probability is always a matter of judgment.

Historical evidence is either that of documents contemporary with the events described or that of tradition fixed in documents written long after the events.

Litera scripta manet, the written letter remains. Full record compels belief. But that means contemporary documents substantially in agreement and so numerous as to make it unthinkable that their authors were unanimously liars or mistaken—still less forgers. When record is doubtful or scanty then judgment as to probability comes in.

For a particular event, documents should outweigh tradition. Thus there is a strong tradition in the United States that, on April 18th, 1775, the first shots were fired at Lexington, which tradition Dean Murdock has disproved in his book, *The Nineteenth of April* 1775. Since the contemporary pictures and other contemporary evidence show the Lexington militia fleeing from the British and not resisting them, and since it is most improbable that a handful of raw troops would commit suicide by standing against an overwhelming number of regulars, we may be reasonably certain that they ran without returning the British fire. The Massachusetts men, including the Lexington company, fought well that day but the fighting began at Concord and not at Lexington, and the national pride amply explains the Lexington tradition.

On the other hand, tradition has value. Did space permit, this could be conclusively proved in great detail, and the job would be worth doing because the anti-traditional mania of a lifetime ago, although dying at the hands of advancing scholarship and especially archæology, is not yet quite dead. But since all the world knows to-day that one can hardly stick a shovel into any old mound from Italy through Greece and Asia Minor to Palestine without digging up evidence favouring some sacred or classical tradition, the point need not be laboured here. When not a particular event but a widespread institution, visible to many witnesses, is in question, then the evidence of tradition is particularly valuable.

Further, the nature of the Early Church gives its tradition far higher value than that of tradition in general. When the Early Church appears in the light of fairly full record soon after the year 200 A.D., it is a body insistent upon unity not only in basic doctrine but also in organization. It claims to invent nothing but to have received all things from its Founder. It decides its differences by asking "which of two opinions best agrees with the Faith once delivered?" In grave matters it holds that its decisions are incontrovertible thanks to an indwelling Holy Spirit promised to it by the Founder. In other words it is a body ideally designed for continuity.

Further, its tradition as to the universality and importance of Bishops is unanimous. Every part of the organized Christian world is presided over by them. When later the Œcumenical Councils are summoned, the testimony of Bishops as to the traditions of their sees is sought as a natural thing and the decision of the assembled

Bishops—when tacitly ratified by the consent of the mass of believers —is final and incontrovertible.

The Christian writers of the late second and early third centuries, St. Hippolytus at Rome, Origen (*c.* 185–254) in Alexandria, Tertullian (*c.* 155–*c.* 222) and St. Cyprian (*c.* 200–258) in North Africa all take Bishops for granted. They have no memory of a time when every local Church was not episcopally governed. Although they know that heretics such as the Ebionites had denied Our Lord's divinity and the Gnostics his humanity, they nowhere record a suggestion that in every city a single chief priest called a Bishop and in succession to the Apostles had not existed from the beginning. Not the faintest echo of debate concerning the office of a Bishop has come down to us.

Consider now the time factor in terms of human life. A slightly older contemporary of St. Cyprian, that is, a man born in 190 and twenty years old in 210, was only one long lifetime removed from the survivors of the apostolic generation. The old men of 210 had in their youth known a generation of old men who in their turn had known men who could well remember contemporaries of the Apostles. This point, well made by Belloc in his *Europe and the Faith*, demolishes the unhistorical idea that in so short a time there might have been a gradual and imperceptible development. Such a thing presupposes a conspiracy of silence, historically unthinkable in such an institution as the Early Church.

Further, we well know that the first and second centuries were unfavourable to the growth of distorted errors in such a matter. They were highly cultured times of frequent travel. The Empire had a single government, no internal frontiers like those of Christendom to-day and consequently no tendency to undue localism. It abounded in highly-cultured men possessed of leisure and concerned over the ultimate problems of human life. All told, therefore, the time was inhospitable to errors of ignorance, vagueness and provincialism.

Accordingly, did no documents from the first two Christian centuries exist, then the strong and unanimous tradition as to monarchical Bishops would be decisive. Even if positive documentary evidence to the contrary existed, that evidence would have to be abundant and capable of meeting severe investigation before any careful historian could set so formidable a tradition aside.

Turning now to the documents themselves, we find the New Testament and certain other documents surviving from the apostolic generation or shortly after. Then until near the end of the second century there is a gap from which only a few fragments survive.

None of these early documents contains a treatise on Orders and Church government—evidently their writers took these things for granted. Almost all their references to them are fragmentary and

incidental. Thus even if the implications fairly to be drawn from these fragments seemed to agree against the primitive character of Church government by a single Bishop in each city, there would remain the difficulty of trusting to their slight evidence as against the vast and solid tradition arising so soon afterwards. The fact is that among the very few documents approaching systematic treatment of the subject we have a clear and most positive statement of the monarchical Episcopate by St. Ignatius of Antioch who gives the threefold Orders Bishop (*Episcopos*), Priests (*Presbuteroi*), and Deacons in each diocese. Now St. Ignatius was born about 50 A.D. and therefore stood to the Crucifixion as men in their early fifties stand to-day to the end of the American Civil War. Because St. Ignatius had an intense nature and wrote under the shadow of martyrdom, certain modern writers have psycho-analysed him unfavourably ; they themselves would be at least equally fit subjects for like treatment.

By contrast, most of the documentary fragments quoted in favour of the diversity theory are altogether inconclusive. Because the opening verses of Acts xiii say that certain " prophets and teachers " in the Church of Antioch " sent forth " St. Paul on his first missionary journey, therefore we are solemnly told that these were then the chief officers of the Antiochean Church. Unfortunately for this argument, since St. Paul was already an Apostle, the highest dignity in the infant Church, it is hard to see how any Antiochean Church officer would have had hierarchical authority to send him anywhere. Accordingly it seems more probable that these prophets and teachers either persuaded St. Paul by the exercise of spiritual gifts independent of Church order or raised money to help meet the expenses of the journey.

To illustrate the grotesque results achieved by arguing from the fragmentary implications of documents irrespective of tradition, suppose I write to a friend that I yesterday met so and so wearing a silk hat. That statement in itself, isolated from the traditions of our society, will not rule out the possibility that the wearer of the silk hat may have been otherwise completely naked. Indeed that is said to be the practice of certain savages who own silk hats. It is solely through our knowledge of the traditions of our own society that we are safe in assuming that the man in question was clothed. Indeed our traditional knowledge will take us further ; it will tell us that he was probably wearing either full evening dress or a suit with a cutaway coat. It will justify belief in shoes, socks, a shirt, collar and necktie as well.

But it may be argued that although the support given to the theory of diversity by the implication of each documentary fragment is small, nevertheless their consensus has some weight. Other things being equal, those documents most prized by the early Church would

be most often copied and therefore most likely to survive. Therefore, the fact that a given fragment has survived is evidence in its favour.

Let us examine the historical evidence as to the survival of documents. In classical literature the argument for the survival of the best and most significant writers breaks down before the virtually complete loss of Sappho's poems, reckoned by ancient critics the greatest Greek lyrics. If we say that not only literary excellence but also suitability for use in education make for survival, that Sappho was obscene and hence unsuitable for a text-book, how then can we account for the survival of authors like Petronius and Martial —at least as obscene as anything that Sappho could have written and far below her in literary merit ? There seems absolutely nothing to show that the lost books of Livy were inferior either as history or literature to his surviving work. If popularity be the test, we must face the fact that to-day many talented men write for audiences reckoned in hundreds while trashy popular novels sell by hundreds of thousands.

Clearly, although there is some force in the idea that the most significant fragments of ancient literature will survive, to press it too far is to fall into an unwarranted Victorian optimism. The theory would work perfectly were we dealing with an infinite number of chances but in fact the number is strictly limited and we must therefore allow very generously for the freaks of what seems mere blind chance. Thus, if anyone were disposed to play roulette through most of their waking hours and for months at a time, and if the wheel were accurate, black and red would doubtless come nearly even. But over shorter periods it is the universal experience of mankind that the wheels of fortune are most uneven. So delightful a poet as Catullus survived in only three manuscripts. A slight illness would have prevented the copying of the first, fire or a careless librarian might well have caused the destruction of the second, and a brush with bandits while the third was in transit might have caused its loss, too. All of which chances would have had no more to do with Catullus's literary excellence than the man in the moon. When the fourteenth-century scholar Boccaccio visited the great monastic library of Monte Cassino he found the monks allowing priceless ancient manuscripts to rot under the weather—in which case the best chance of survival would be to those which merely happened to be in the middle of each pile. Precisely the same luck preserved the letter which, after a hundred and fifty years, identified Washington's chief spy in New York through the last phase of the Revolution ; it was thrown into a stove to be burnt, but happening to be in the middle of a tight packet or wad of other letters it did not catch fire and was afterwards rescued intact.

Once admit the large part of what seems blind chance in such

matters and we must conclude that surviving fragments may or may not be significant.

A perfect and amusing example of the grotesque results possible, to one who would argue strongly from fragmentary record, can be drawn from the American Revolution. We know from full record that one of its chief results was to destroy hereditary monarchy in the Thirteen Colonies. If, however, we assume the future destruction of most Revolutionary records together with the survival of certain unquestionably genuine documents, then two thousand years from now a scholar contemptuous of tradition, going solely by those documents, and arguing as Protestants still sometimes argue against Bishops, would be well able to claim that the Revolution was not against hereditary monarchy but on the contrary balanced between hereditary and elective government.

Let us assume a knowledge of the Revolution parallel to our present knowledge of the Early Church. Let our future scholar know that pre-revolutionary England and America were alike familiar with the idea of elections. Just so we know that the ancient Roman World was familiar with the institution of monarchy; it had the Emperors whose powers were continually increasing at the expense of the Senate, it had provincial governors who were deputy-monarchs, and in Jewish religious affairs it had the "Masters" of Synagogues. Let our future scholar know that the United States of the early twentieth century was governed solely by elected persons and that a strong tradition existed that such had been the case from the beginning of the Republic. Just so we know the Universal Church of about 200 A.D. to have been everywhere governed by Bishops, everywhere to have believed the Bishops' office primitive, and retained no trace of disagreement as to its primitiveness. Let the learned of 4000 A.D. possess fragmentary record of the institutions set up by the Revolution and of the political opinions current among the American patriots of the time. Some of these fragments would strongly support the tradition as to elective government—exactly as the passages in Acts describing St. James as monarchical Bishop in Jerusalem, together with St. Ignatius' testimony to the three Orders, support the third-century tradition as to Bishops.

But let us assume also that certain other and apparently contrary fragments had survived, seeming to tell against the primitiveness of the elective principle throughout the United States precisely as certain early Christian documents seem to tell against the universality of monarchical Bishops in the early Church. We here approach the hub of the argument. Let us assume our future scholar possessed of the diary of Captain John Montresor of the Royal Engineers, stationed in New York City during the Stamp Act troubles of the seventeen-sixties. He would find Montresor writing "if we may judge of the loyalty of most people here, they acknowledge the King

but not the power of Parliament." Let him know the early Revolutionary fashion of referring to the British troops in America not as " Royal " but as " Ministerial " troops, especially let him have Washington's letter of May 31st, 1775, from Philadelphia to George William Fairfax, speaking of " . . . the Ministerial troops (for we do not, nor can we yet prevail upon ourselves to call them the King's troops)." Let him have several of the high compliments paid by Americans to Louis XVI, showing American feeling most friendly to an hereditary allied monarch. Let him know in some detail the seventeen eighty-two attempt of certain army officers to make Washington King of America, also that Washington had no children —which deficiency could have been assigned as a reason for not accepting.

From the period immediately following the Revolution let us suppose that our scholar of A.D. 4000 had Madison's letter of seventeen eighty-seven, written just after the democratic riots in New England and saying " the late turbulent scenes in Massachusetts and Rhode Island have done inexpressible injury to the Republican character in that part of the United States, and a propensity toward Monarchy is said to have been produced . . . in some leading minds." Finally, let him know Franklin as an extreme Democrat and let him have *Madison's Journal* for June 2nd, 1787, making Franklin say " there is a natural inclination in mankind to kingly government. It sometimes relieves them from aristocratic domination. They had rather have one tyrant than five hundred. It gives more the appearance of equality among citizens and that they like."

To-day abundant record permits us to put the foregoing documents in their place. If, on the other hand, our future scholars were disposed to argue on Protestant principles (which, in the interest of sound learning, may God forbid), is there any doubt what he would say? It would be something like this: The unquestionably genuine documents surviving from the Revolutionary era in the United States " . . . form a solid basis—and the only solid basis—on which to build a history of the primitive "—American State. (The words in quotation marks are taken bodily from a recent exponent of the pro-Protestant theory of diversity speaking of the surviving apostolic documents.) Arguing thus, our learned man of A.D. 4000 would solemnly conclude the United States long balanced between hereditary and elective governments. If by any chance he discovered that Rhode Island in the year 1802 was governed by a certain governor Fenner and in the year 1829 by a second Fenner, who was the legitimate son of the first, then he would be quite certain and would write " the happy results of recent research in Rhode Island have sufficed to establish the existence of hereditary government in post-revolutionary America. In view of the well-known

statements of Montresor, of Washington himself, of Madison and of Franklin, the long-believed tradition of universal elective government in the early United States, long doubted by the Higher Critics, has now received its death blow. The objection of certain hide-bound and reactionary men to the effect that the traditional list of Rhode Island governors gives several names intervening between the two Fenners is hardly worthy of attention. It will be evident that the intervening names, if genuine at all, are morally certain to have been those of regents acting in the name of the younger Fenner until his maturity!"

If the reader is amused, let him none the less note that our imaginary pedant is repeating almost word for word the Protestant argument against Bishops.

What, then, can history really tell us of the early Church in general and of her Bishops in particular? Whether the Faith be true or no, history cannot say. In the strict sense neither the books of the New Testament nor the other earliest Christian writings can be called historical documents because they are full of marvels and are unsupported by other contemporary documents from outside what was at first the small and obscure Christian society. Except Josephus, no contemporary non-Christian document so much as mentions Our Lord. It is true that Josephus's testimony has recently been strengthened by the discovery of a Slavic manuscript apparently translated from the lost Aramaic version which we know Josephus first made—this Slavic manuscript contains the reference to Our Lord in a form more ample than in the long-known Greek version. But this reference, although it strengthens the historical case for Our Lord's existence, is not altogether conclusive because it stands alone. It is true that history finds it equally impossible to deny the genuineness of the early documents; the historical characters appearing in them such as Pilate and the Herods are used correctly, which might not be the case in spurious writings especially if later in time. But for history the early Christian documents would be inconclusive if unsupported and unconfirmed by tradition.

Accordingly the history of the infant Church is based first of all not upon the New Testament and other primitive documents but upon the Catholic—that is Universal—tradition of the early third century. The early third century Church is an historical fact, solid and definite. We know her belief in the combined Divinity and Humanity of her Founder, her Eucharistic worship. We know her passion for pure tradition and for unity, also her insistence upon regular organization for maintaining both. We know the world in which she grew up. We have her word and her word alone for the genuineness of the early Christian writings. If we find her mistaken as to her Orders we are at liberty to doubt the earthly existence of Our Lord Himself, for both rest on the same traditional basis. But

that the first Christians, whether rightly or wrongly, believed as the third-century Christians believed is so overwhelmingly probable that we are intellectually compelled to accept it as historical fact.

Were we compelled to account for the documentary fragments quoted by Protestants against the institution of Bishops, many reasonable suppositions might be made. For instance, it is conceivable that the earliest Bishops were known as Apostles, and that as this term passed out of use there may have been some local and temporary confusion between the terms *Episcopos* and *Presbuteros*. In a body expanding so rapidly as the Early Church, and so full of spiritual gifts existing independently of Church Order, some slight symptoms of such confusion would be natural. Further, a persecuted body cannot organize as regularly as if legally established. Incidentally, the persecutions make it difficult to explain the institutions of regular clergy and of Bishops on the ground of worldly ambition among the early Christian leaders—to be known as a Christian leader merely increased one's chances of being tortured to death in the next persecution. In any event we as historians need press none of the various guesses which would explain the various documentary fragments quoted by Protestants. It is enough for us to insist kindly and fraternally that the historical difficulties are theirs, not ours.

THE ARMENIAN CHURCH AND THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON.

By the VARTOPED SHAVARSH KOUYOUJIAN.

IT is common even for people of scholarship to go astray on a dogmatic point about the Armenian Orthodox Apostolic Catholic Church.

In spite of the facts that she derives her apostolic origin from two actual disciples of our Lord—SS. Thaddeus and Bartholomew—that she was the first Christian Church in the world to be recognized by the state as national, and that after all, she possesses, as her name suggests, the threefold criterion of the Church of our Lord, a heretical feature, namely Monophysitism, is ascribed to her. The most recent occasion on which she was so stigmatized was in an article in *The Times* (Feb. 20, 1932).

In order to be able to discuss that misleading statement we have to know what is the connotation of the term applied.

Monophysitism is the belief which recognizes only one nature μόνη φύσις, the Divine, in Christ, and rejects His Manhood.

In this connection we have to remember the fact that this heresy originated in reaction from Nestorianism, which was refuted at the Council of Ephesus in the formula: μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ σεσαρκωμένη.

Though this clear-cut formula can bear only one interpretation, yet we judge it as well to state this: (in the first stage) The word The Logos was "Light of Light, Very God of Very God . . . . (in the second stage) Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified . . . ."

Owing to his zeal against Nestorius, Eutyches found himself driven to the opposite extreme. He held a confused union of the divine and human natures: an amalgamation of the two. The matter was discussed at the Council of Chalcedon (451) where while the orthodox insisted upon the formula μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ σεσαρκωμένη (one incarnate Person having two natures), Eutyches took it up and altered it to μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ σεσαρκωμένου (one nature in the Incarnate), as the result of an absorption of the human nature into the divine. This was duly condemned, and a *perfect, unconfused* union of the two natures was proclaimed: one ὑπόστασις, one πρόσωπον, two natures, without confusion, without change, without rending, without separation.

Now this is the very confession of the Armenian Church,

according to which she says: ". . . and the perfect God became a perfect man in soul, mind and body; one person one figure, and *united one nature* . . . without change, without alteration . . ."

Thus it is obvious from this comment on the formula *μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ σεσαρκωμένη* (as the grammatical construction of the phrase not to one nature of the Incarnate Word *φύσις* is applied to the One Incarnate Nature of the Divine Word (*σεσαρκωμένη*), not to one nature of the Incarnate Word (*σεσαρκωμένου*). In other words, *φύσις* is taken for *πρόσωπον* or *ὑπόστασις*. Therefore our Lord is confessed *ἓν προσωπον, δυο φυσεις μετὰ τὴν σαρκωσιν.*

Here is a quotation from St. Gregory of Nareg (10th cent.) the greatest monk and mystic poet of the Armenian Church: "Taking truly the very structure of the human body, the great God united in Himself without confusion . . . ."

In conclusion, the Armenian Church has been always loyal to the Orthodox Confession of *the Church*.

Here arises the question of the attitude of the Armenian Church towards that Council—a paradox for some people and a stumbling-block for many. She could not take any part in that Council for these reasons: 1, In the year 451, while doctrinal discussions were going on at Chalcedon the Armenian Church, the corner stones of which were formed by the Three Œcumenical Councils, was fighting the Persian Empire in order to secure her faith against Zoroastrianism. It is needless to mention the overwhelming power of the Persian religion which, as a vigorous rival, menaced not only a National Church, but Christianity itself.

As an immediate result of that war the bishops were either imprisoned or exiled, the princes scattered, the fighting power crushed, and the people panic-stricken.[1] Under these conditions

[1] Gibbon wrote (*Decline and Fall*: II, 322). "Since the age of Constantine the Armenians had signalized their attachment to the religion . . . . of the Christians." "The disorders of their country and their ignorance of the Greek tongue prevented their clergy from assisting at the Synod of Chalcedon."

For "since the age of Constantine" in the above passage, truth would substitute "since the age of the Apostles." The Armenians proclaimed their Church as National in 301, before Constantine's proclamation of Christianity as the State religion.

Gibbon's "disorders" were a vital religious struggle against Zoroastrianism: and as for the Greek tongue, the version of the Bible made from the Septuagint by the Armenians and characterized by European scholars as a Queen of translations, is witness that some at least of the Armenian clergy were masters of it.

Gibbon continues: "They floated eighty-four years in a state of indifference or suspense, till their vacant faith was finally occupied by the missionaries of Julian of Halicarnassus." "The Armenians alone are the pure disciples of Eutyches . . . . they alone persevere in the opinion that the manhood of Christ was created, or existed without creation, of a divine and incorruptible substance" . . . . In contrast with this, the truth is that the Armenians always remained firm in the teaching of the Church, till their full faith finally urged them to face Zoroastrianism and to anathematize the missionaries of Julian Halicarnassus. The Armenians alone are the loyal followers of the Three Œcumenical Councils. They persevere, with the Church, in the Faith that the Logos was truly incarnate in a perfect unconfused union of the Two Natures.

could she think about taking part in the Council? What she really and naturally wanted to be given was some christianlike assistance in her fatal struggle, and this was denied. Marcian, the emperor, who patronized the Council, rejected the petition of the Armenian delegation.

2.—The doctrines of the Armenian Church already contained the Chalcedonian Definition, but never accepted the Council itself, since the points of Christian dogma, of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation and Redemption, were already stated in the Creed of the First Three Councils. The business of a general council must be to transfer the dogmas to the faithful as revealed by God as compulsory for belief, leaving the doctrines to be discussed by the doctors of the church. Dogma is a matter of belief, doctrine is a matter of study. The Council of Chalcedon, strangely enough, mixed up these two distinct features, and taking up a dogmatic point—our Lord's perfect divinity and true manhood (already settled in the previous councils)—began to discuss the way in which they were united. It is true that Eutyches denied our Lord's manhood, but what next? All the Apostolic Churches were firm on their common creed; Eutyches, therefore, had to be counted as a rebel for not submitting himself to the faith of the Church, an heresiarch, and consequently he should have been simply excommunicated. To illustrate what we are insisting upon, let us take the case of people of diverse and false opinions. Nobody cares to hold general councils to refute them; there is the Creed; it concerns them to submit themselves to it or to keep away from the Church.

Let us now consider some historial data, in justification of the attitude of the Armenian Church towards the Chalcedonian Council. One of the aims—if not the only one—of that Council was to exalt the See of Constantinople, and this was done; but it aroused the opposition of Rome. Thus she refused to accept —as we shall see later—a decision which was not in her favour. Moreover, the subtle distinction between "two persons" (heresy) and "two natures" (orthodoxy) was not fully apprehended by the majority of people. Thus the Chalcedonian Definition, suspected of Nestorianism, was suspended. It will be remembered that after their defeat, the Nestorians took refuge in Persia which encouraged them for political reasons. After the Council of Chalcedon they became active. A council took place in Antioch (476), which considered the Chalcedonian Definition as suspicious. Similarly various emperors issued edicts rejecting it and confining themselves to the Ephesean clear-cut Definition. It is mainly from this point of view, of suspicion, that the Armenian Church kept herself clear of it. She would have had nothing to do with all these, had the Nestorian Assyrians not prevailed—in setting forth, as did

Nestorius himself, the Chalcedonian Definition—over the Orthodox Assyrians who solicited her. Finally, in a National Council held in 506, she proclaimed the confession of the Council of Ephesus, and repudiated not only Nestorianism, but also anything suspected of Nestorianism, including the Council of Chalcedon, and Monophysitism or Eutychianism.

3.—The third reason why the Armenian Church could not be interested in the Council of Chalcedon, is the fact, that under the guise of a Doctrinal Discussion, it was a question of precedence and influence among the distinguished Sees. During the first three centuries there were three patriarchates: that of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. But at the Council of 381, Constantinople was also raised to that dignity, the patriarchs basing their claims on the ground that it had been proclaimed capital of the whole empire, and that an Œcumenical Council had been held there. The See of Alexandria could not endure this. It recalled the fact that two of the holders of that See were dethroned as heresiarchs, Macedonius and Nestorius: while its own patriarchs, Alexander, Athanasius, Theophilus and Cyril were the champions of the Church. Likewise Rome could not tolerate a claim of that kind. That is why it refused, as we stated above, to acknowledge the decision of Chalcedon which ranked the See of Constantinople next to it; because it feared that one day the See of Constantinople might—as it had risen from the fifth position to the second—claim to be first.

We should like to repeat our statement that the council dealt with was not regarded, even by the Roman and Greek churches themselves, as general, until, in the process of time, their differences with regard to temporal authority were settled. The Armenian Church always refused to acknowledge a council which was held in the interests of parts of the Church and not of the whole.

In this connection I cannot help mentioning the Georgian Church. As long as she was loyal to the Armenian Church, she kept her identity and enjoyed all her privileges. But the moment she accepted the Council of Chalcedon she resigned her independence; because there came a period when the Russian Church, as a kindred body, interfered with her affairs. The result is that the ceremonies and the language, even the head-bishop and the bishops are Russian. Long before the Russian interference she was obliged to withdraw from the Holy Land, bequeathing her post to her sister, the Greek.

Of course it would be different for the Armenian Church had she not been wise enough to reject the Chalcedonian Council; but she would have risked being considered a part of the Greek Church, just as there are now people who do not realize that she is not monophysite.

4.— At the present moment the Council of Chalcedon has no significance for the Armenian Church. She has always been able to manage for herself while accepting only the Three General Councils. This is a strong position which has its sound justification. The universal character attached to a council is based on the number of churches taking part in it, and implies that they are in perfect harmony on the matters which were settled. Now that kind of harmony was realized from 325 to 431, at the Three General Councils, when the Church as a coherent whole, faced and overcame all the difficulties. After that period certain churches held private councils, passed laws, and even rose against one another. Thus mundane ambitions culminated in the Council of Chalcedon, which was denied the title of "General" for fifty years. What a contrast to the first Three General Councils!

For a moment let us suppose that the Armenian Church were to acknowledge the Council in question. What next? Would she not be obliged automatically to accept three others peculiar to the Greek and Roman Churches? Then what about the thirteen others, besides the seven peculiar to the Roman Church?

Thus the attitude of the Armenian Church is entirely justified. She will never condescend to any form other than her own. It is the others who must themselves go back to the most cherished apostolic simplicity, where they meet the Armenian Church.

If the longed-for unselfish union of the churches, dominated by Christian love is what is really wanted, then they must all go back to the point from which they all derived their Common Creed.

But before that blessed day dawns, to get rid of ignorance or injustice, the writer of this article asks all who are interested in this matter not to attach the stigma of Monophysitism to the Armenian Orthodox Apostolic Catholic Church.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

By Leicester C. Lewis, Ph.D.

IN view of the steadily increasing friendship between the Eastern and Anglican Churches, I am glad to put on record the account of a serious attempt at intercommunion, made in America now nearly thirty years ago, which in the mysterious providence of God miscarried.

It will be recalled that at the famous consecration of Dr. Weiler as Bishop Coadjutor of Fond du Lac (Wisconsin) in 1900, both Bishop Koslovski of the Polish Old Catholics and Bishop Tikhon, later Patriarch of the Russian Church, were present, in the chancel vested. The photograph taken of the bishops at this consecration popularized the significance of the service, and well it deserved to do so. Every one of the vestments contested during previous fifty years in the Anglican Communion was used at this solemnity, under the authority of the bishops commissioned to consecrate by the Presiding Bishop of the American Church. The three episcopal ministers of the altar wore the full eucharistic vestments, besides cope and mitre, and the Assisting Bishops were also in cope and mitre. Incense and processional lights were used, and the Blessed Sacrament was reserved on a side altar. Therefore practically every point of consequence which had been in litigation during the Ceremonial Revival was employed here under the highest possible authority. Moreover when criticism of the service was made in certain quarters, Bishop MacLaren of Chicago, himself one of the assisting bishops, and recognized as the foremost canonist in the House of Bishops, publicly invited anyone who could do so to test formally the legality of the service. None dared to do this, and hence the Fond du Lac consecration closed an epoch in the story of the revival of Church ways in America.

The ceremonial importance of this beautiful service has long been known and appreciated, but it had a little known sequel, which I wish to chronicle here.

The Russian Bishop Tikhon, as I have said, was present vested, and it had been the intention of Bishop Grafton, the Chief Consecrator, to have him join with the American prelates in the actual laying on of hands. Owing, however, to the strong opposition of one of the assisting Bishops, this did not happen, and the Russian bishop was "merely present." Bishop Tikhon, however, remained on terms of close intimacy with Bishop Grafton,

and indeed through the latter's influence was made an honorary doctor of theology of Nashotah Seminary.

Not long after this, Bishop Tikhon, with his seat in New York, found it necessary to consecrate a bishop for the Orthodox Church in Brooklyn. The candidate was Archimandrite Raphael, whose jurisdiction was to be among the Syrians. At that time there were only two Orthodox prelates in America, Tikhon of New York and Innocent of Alaska. Now it was that Bishop Tikhon, remembering the great service at Fond du Lac, and in view of all he had heard of things Anglican from Bishop Grafton, *invited the latter to join in the consecration of Bishop Raphael, thus making up the canonical third consecrator.*

The implications of such an act were of course obvious, and Bishop Grafton accepted the invitation with apostolic eagerness. His Chaplain in the East at that time was the Reverend Sigourney Fay, then still in Deacon's Orders, later Archdeacon of Fond du Lac and Professor of Dogmatics at New York. I, then a school boy, had known Fr. Fay at Holy Cross Monastery, and as a consequence he asked another friend, Clement Hoffmann, and myself, to come to the service as acolytes.

The chaplain and the acolytes arrived at the Russian Church on Ocean Avenue, Brooklyn, in good time for the service, only to find that Bishop Grafton was unable to be present. He had been taken seriously ill over the week-end, and the physician had positively forbidden his leaving his bed. With Bishop Grafton's unstinted and lifelong devotion to Catholic ideals, we can be certain that this was no diplomatic illness.

So all that happened was that the Anglican chaplain and acolytes were present in the sanctuary without their bishop. The two Russian bishops conducted the ceremony, and consecrated without a third. We, however, were given places of honour behind the ikonostas, were separately censed, and received the unconsecrated elements of the Agapé at the end of the service. The Gospel was sung in several languages, including the original Aramaic words used by Our Lord.

As, in the years since, Fr. Fay became a Roman Catholic and later died, and as I understand that my acolyte companion of whom I lost track soon after the service has also died, it seems only fitting that the attempt at genuine Catholic fellowship between two great bishops and confessors, Grafton of Fond du Lac and Tikhon of Moscow, should be placed on record by the sole Anglican survivor of the attempt.